

Wait for the President's State of the Union, wait for his budget resolution, wait to see if the promise in values that were articulated in the inaugural address will be played out in the actual budget presented to Congress in the future. That is what we have to do.

There are a lot of hungry people in America today. There are a lot of families anxious to find work. There are a lot of people who have jobs today that are not quite what they were a year ago. We have lost manufacturing jobs across this country. We have health insurance costs going up dramatically, not only hurting businesses but labor unions as well. Schools are struggling to do their job. We are in a much more competitive world.

But I think what the President said today was a message of hope; that if we can come together as a nation, regardless of our political persuasion, that if we can be honest about the challenges, and if we can give a little on both sides to work out compromises, the country can, in the future, as it has in the past, rise to the occasion. I look forward to being a part of that process.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

A CALL FOR UNIFICATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, every 4 years, at the time of the inauguration, it is a festive time in America. It certainly is a time of celebration in Washington, DC. I have had the good fortune of being able to be here on a number of occasions.

As I look back, the thing that stands out—Democrat and Republican—is how cold the weather is. It is always cold. It is always a question of how cold it is going to be. I had the good fortune, historically, of being able to serve here in the Senate when we canceled an outdoor inauguration ceremony for President Reagan. It was so cold it simply could not be held outside, and the crowd had to be thinned down by thousands and thousands, and people jammed into the Rotunda behind us. Even though it was cold outside, it was still warm inside at the second inauguration of President Reagan. It is a time when we put political differences aside and honor the American presidency.

I have had a lot of microphones shoved in my direction today. Each of those times I tried to recognize the day. The day is to honor our system of Government.

If we look back 4 years ago, there was a situation where the man who was elected President received fewer votes than the person he beat. We had the

tremendous problems with the electoral system in Florida, and then we had the race decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. But America being as it is, the minute the Supreme Court made their decision, Vice President Gore and the rest of the country recognized that the election was over. There wasn't a window broken; there were no riots; no one was hurt. The inauguration went forward as if President Bush had won by 10 million votes. That is what our country is all about. We are a nation of laws, not a nation of men.

It is my hope that today will usher in a new beginning in Washington. I say that because we have had a lot of partisan rancor and squabbling. I hope that now gives way to a spirit of bipartisanship. Frankly, we didn't get much in the last 4 years with the new tone. The President said he wanted to be a uniter and not a divider. For reasons I don't fully understand, that never took place.

I spoke to the President the day after the election, and it was a pleasant conversation. He clearly indicated at that time that he wanted to reach out. He said: I haven't another election, and I want to do my best to get along. That is my take on what he said to me. I hope we are able to go forward on the message the President delivered to me. This country needs unification. We have been divided too long.

Today we had a little lunch after the inauguration ceremony. Of all the speeches the President has given, his speech there, which took less than 5 minutes, was the best he has ever delivered. I commented on that. It was because he delivered the speech recognizing the tremendous responsibilities he has as President of the United States. You could tell by listening to and watching him the emotion that he felt. I was very impressed with that.

I trust and hope that the President's expressed feelings today go forward in the months and years to come. I say that because the American people are counting on us. People from Rhode Island, people from Illinois, people from Nevada, people from all over the country are depending on us to work together to tackle the immense problems facing this Nation.

We on this side of the aisle—the aisle that we talk about so much is right here—all 45 of us have stated privately and publicly, we will work with the President. But I do say this: We will not shy away from living up to the values and priorities we believe are important in our country. We are serious in tone and in context. We will work with the President.

He took an oath of office today. We all saw that on national television. People don't often see us every 6 years when we take the oath of office. During his remarks following taking the oath of office, he praised the wisdom contained in the document we call the Constitution. That document lays forth the separation of powers within our Government, the three separate

but equal branches of Government. I take my constitutional responsibility just as does the President of the United States.

We as Senators have constitutional obligations to which we swear every 6 years when we take our oath of office and fulfill our contract with the people of our respective States. Speaking for those on this side of the aisle, we are going to work as hard as we can to live up to the expectations the American people have in us. We may be elected as Democrats and Republicans, but we don't serve as Democrats and Republicans. We serve ultimately as Americans. There are so many areas where we can find common ground, we need not look to areas where we can squabble and be partisan. If we work together on the areas where we have common ground, it would take every waking minute the Senate has.

I look forward to being the new Democratic leader, working with this caucus and working with the President and my Republican colleagues to find ways that we can keep our commitments to the armed services, those serving in uniform in Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, the Balkans, all over the world, as they are serving to keep Americans safe. The war on terror is a war for which we must be vigilant, and we will do everything we can to support the armed services of our country.

One of our immediate tasks must be to put our Nation's fiscal house in order. There can be no question about the need to do that. We are spending more money than we are taking in as a government. We are spending in excess of our resources by far too much. There is much work to be done to strengthen education, expand access to quality, affordable health care.

I don't talk about bipartisanship just in theory. I have had the good fortune to work with Senator JOHN ENSIGN, a Republican. JOHN ENSIGN and I are from the State of Nevada. Six years ago we were in one of the most difficult, bitter races, not only in the history of the State of Nevada but the history of our country. That race was ultimately decided by 428 votes. Here it is 6 years later, and JOHN ENSIGN is now a member of the Senate.

JOHN ENSIGN is a loyal Republican, and I do my very best to represent the Democratic Party. But because of our work together, the work of Senator REID and Senator ENSIGN, we have worked on that which is important to the State of Nevada and, we believe, to the country. We have worked together in a bipartisan basis. That work has been beneficial to our country.

With the spirit of the inauguration close to our hearts today, I look forward to the great debates ahead in the great debating society we call the Senate. I am optimistic and confident that today could be a new beginning. But it will only be a new beginning if the tone that is set today is carried forward in the years to come in making our country the country it has the potential to be.